dure houses. Dishes, benches, cooking boxes, cradles, mortars, canoes, all were carved from this wood. The bark was woven into baskets, and when dyed formed the most common ceremonial decoration.

Even within the forty miles of the river valley formerly occupied by the Bella Coola there are considerable variations in climate. At the mouth of the river the typical Pacific coast type is found, without great extremes of temperature and with much rain, especially in winter time. During winter, the moisture is precipitated as snow a few hundred feet above the valley, and the limit of the snow can be marked on the mountain slopes, rising or falling a few feet from day to day. Further up the valley, the winters are colder and in many years snow lies for weeks on the ground, and in the upper part of the Bella Coola area the winters are severe, although much more moderate than on the upper regions immediately to the east.

What has been the history of the inhabitants of this land? They believe that long, long ago, *Alyentlin*, the supreme god, caused their first ancestors to be created in his house, *Nuxwatl'a*, in the land above, and sent them down to populate the Bella Coola valley. These first people came in groups of one or three, brothers and sisters, or occasionally men and wife, each group descending, in many cases to animal form, to a certain mountain and then making their home on its foot. They brought with them animals and fish, roots and berries, also the knowledge of ceremonial dances. In fact, they differed from the Bella Coola of the recent past only in having greater supernatural power. These first people increased with extraordinary rapidity, until each group grew into a village, bound together by a knowledge of their first ancestor. In course of time the emergence of certain villages continued, as some increased more rapidly than others, but on the whole each settlement maintained its character of being the descendants of one group of the first settlers of the world.

This mythological belief is a fair picture of Bella Coola life as it was when the first white men visited the valley. Mar-

[illegible] 173
[illegible] 361
[illegible] 175

[illegible] Though it is impossible to estimate the former population 161
of the Bella Coola valley with any degree of accuracy, it must
have been in the thousands. At open there were surviving rather
more than three hundred individuals, who live in one village on
an Indian reserve near the north bank of the Bella Coola River,
about a quarter of a mile from the sea. In the last century the [164
white men smitten with smallpox, and since then consumption, 177
venereal disease, measles, and other diseases of the white man 182
have taken their deadly toll. Changed conditions of life and
decay of the rich ceremonial system which formed their recre-
ation in the old days are also contributory factors in their
decline. Within the last few years, however, the population
has begun to increase.

[illegible] Coast Villages

The following list of Bella Coola villages was obtained, 361
in an effort to learn which had been deserted in recent years, [124
the writer always asked whether or not a town was occupied 175
at the time of Mackenzie's visit, an event of such great interest
to the grandparents of the older people that the memory of it
is still preserved. Villages said to have been occupied at that
time are marked with an asterisk.

[illegible] These towns empty into the head of South Bentinck Arm, 133
which is about one mile in width (see Plate 1). The Bella
Coola, flowing from the east, enters at the southern edge, and
the Nuskumalasa-s winds in from the north at the opposite
angle of the head of the Arm. This stream, "The Dean [103
River" of the Bella Coola, so-called because of its proximity
to the sea, is shown on maps as the Nuskumalasa. Between
the mouths of these two is the *Ts-tsit*, a small stream along

1:96 Dorsey E-1 (1922-1924)/968
NEA Bella Coola NEA

(5) *Ăwatqmo xoĺ*, "Lakeward": the eastern continuation of the last mentioned.[1] The name is explained as follows:

One of the people who came to the earth in the beginning of time, *Tsiskwaia* by name, travelled to the Skeena River, and there saw women wearing labrets. On his return to Bella Coola he settled at *Awatqmo xoĺ* and carved on his totem-pole[2] the figure of a woman with an abalone-shell labret as a memorial of his voyage. Visitors coming to his particulars named the town from this figure.

This was one of the largest towns in the valley.

*(6) *Kimĺ-ic*, a small town to the north of the last, not far from the *Pe-nik*. It is assumed that it was founded by a descendant of *Tsiskwaia* named *Kimĺ-ic*. The consensus of opinion is that it has not been occupied for many years, but one informant recently dug up a clay pipe on the alleged site.

*(7) *Skĺskĺĺ*, "What Has Been Divided": on the south shore of the Bella Coola River about a quarter of a mile from the sea. This village was founded by a certain *Xoĺ*.

*(8) *Xemqo-ic*, meaning doubtful, perhaps "Salty": this, the most populous village of the valley in the recent past, is still inhabited by one or two families. The inhabitants of other towns explain its large population by marriages with slaves. This is the upper, or eastern, continuation of the preceding, and the two in combination formed a row of houses stretching for three-quarters of a mile (see Plate 3).

(9) *Qaxelqamq*, "The Trenton Place": on the north side of the Bella Coola, supposedly about half a mile above *Kimĺ-ic*. This village was long ago deserted.

(10) *Tsaĺ-xwaĺqa-ic*, "Where There Is Much Inshore-ally," a kind of hollow-gunwaled plant: some distance from

[1] Several towns, each consisting of a single row of houses, are regarded as forming one village. In such cases there is no visible boundary mark.

[2] The Bella Coola believe that their early ancestors used totem-poles, repeated reference to them will be made, even though the myth of Raithana and others on the recent origin of totem-poles on the North-West Coast indicate that the Bella Coola example are not historically accurate.

the north bank of the Bella Coola,[a] near the lower slope of the mountain, and about three miles from the sea. It is probable that there was a town at this spot very long ago, according to the statement of one old man, and the numerous superstitions (II, p.8) in the vicinity support this view.

"(xv) *Sawil*, "Sunny," or "Fallen Sun": on the south side of the Bella Coola opposite the preceding. It was deserted about 1877. This was a fairly large town, though never as big as Nuxalk is. The name is derived from *Sun*, *sun*, and there are two explanations given for it. One informant states that the name came from the many revolutions of the Sun to the first people there; another that the first chief, said to have been named *Saltlema*, erected a large totem-pole, decorated with the figure of a sun. This blew down, in consequence of which the people called their town *Sawil*, "Fallen Sun."

"(xvi) *Squmalt*: on the south side of the Bella Coola about three miles from the sea, and a short distance below the end of the present bridge. The meaning of the name is unknown.

"(xvii) *Tsemtsil*, "Where the River Is Sufficiently Deep to Cover the Stones, but Shallow Enough for Rapids": the upper continuation of the last-named. It was deserted during the smallpox epidemic. The name of the chief who came there at the beginning of time was given as *Tsemtsilulut*.

(xviii) *Snu'umqulk*, "On the Point": on a curving promontory on the south bank of the river about four miles from the sea. It was long ago swept away when the river changed its course.

(xix) *Nu'umulk*, "The Place of Foul Water": on the north bank of the Bella Coola a little above the preceding, at a place where there were a number of evaporant pools between the river and the mountains. No one knows how long ago this town was abandoned, but as the names of people living there figure in stories which are said to be of no great antiquity, it

[a] The river frequently changes its course, so that villages that are at a considerable distance from it may once have been on its banks.

was probably deserted not many years ago. Probably a large town once; it was a good fishing place.

(vi) *Tsuki*, "Bald Eagle": also on the north shore of the river, a little above the last-named. Probably washed away by a flood long ago, although traces of the salmon-weir were still visible recently.

(vii) *Nupkomiu*, "The Place of Much *pinnuk*" (the fish *Lepidurus cylindrurus*): on the north side of the river about one mile above the preceding. This large town is believed to have been deserted long ago, though, in apparent contradiction, traces of it are said to be still visible.

"(viii) *Inukik*, "The Place of Dog-Salmon": on the south bank, above the last-named, at a place where a small stream enters the Sulu Coulo River; this divided the town into two sections. It was long deserted and the river has carried away that part of the village below the creek. The name is derived from an enormous dog salmon which is believed to have been seen at long intervals in a waterfall near this spot, always with a white seal perched on its back.

(ix) *Ugnikhuag*: on the lower end of the island near Diggon-bung post office, eleven miles from the mouth. Although long deserted, traces of the village are still to be seen. The meaning of the name is unknown.

"(x) *Nukik*, "The Place of the Whirlpool": on the south side of the river, eleven and a quarter miles from the sea. It was a village of moderate size, recently abandoned. The last occupant was said to have been *Ulumiak*, which means, "The Place of Ill."

"(xi) *Kuko-ho-i*, "The Concave Town," so called because it spread around the shore of a bay occupied on by the Sulu Creek: south side, slightly above the inlet of the Nuchlon River, thirteen and a quarter miles from the sea. It was deserted about 1880.

"(xii) *Nunjuin*, "The Place of *Igalmut*": on the north side of the river, opposite the mouth of the same name. It also was deserted about 1880. *Igalmut* is a kind of grass-mat

[illegible] ette by one, which occurs in the valley of a small stream on the slope of the mountain.

[illegible] "(qq) Nalkun, "The Place Where There Are No Fish": an affluent from the north enters the main Bella Coola about forty-one miles from the sea and the town was located on the south about two hundred yards above its junction with the Bella Coola. The ruins of the moderately large town were still standing about 1870. Mackenzie reached the Bella Coola River at this place. At the time of his arrival the population was larger than usual, because the salmon-run had withered some heavy feathers which had destroyed several weirs on the Bella Coola, and driven the inhabitants of other villages to Nalkun.

[illegible] It is said that the affluent at Nalkun, the stream Xaqlx, is the only one in the whole Bella Coola valley that does not drop precipitously into a ravine leading to the main river. Its source is a spring at the end of a pocket-like valley, at the foot of steep cliffs, but it does not fall down them. The town is named from this circumstance. The area around the spring is called Nyamkwaqlx, and it is said that some families living on the Skowen sing of it as the spot where their first ancestors came to earth, although their descendants do not know where it is located.

"(rr) Snaw: on the point between the Lq'aik (Dowitie) and Ala'al (Whitemouse) rivers which join to form the Bella Coola. This, the most populous of the upper river towns, was deserted not long ago. The meaning of the name is unknown.

(ss) Qaltuk, "The Place of Shrimps": on the north side of the Dowitie River, a few hundred yards above the forks. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name was given on account of the hill behind the village being covered with a rank growth of plants and small bushes, but no trees.

(tt) Snaik-it, "The Place of Fish," so called from the strong rapids of the Dowitie at this point: on the north side of the river about six miles from the forks. This large town was long ago deserted when a huge rock in the midst of the

ornaments, on which the salmon were carved, was carried away.[illegible]

The following village may be included with the above.

(27) *Wanuq*: on the shore of North Bentinck Arm, to the east of the creek that flows into it at Green Bay. This long deserted village was built so close to the water that high tides reached almost to the houses. According to one informant, the name was derived from that of the first chief seen down from above to that spot; while another connected it, etymologically, with *Wam*, the name of the barren district some four and a half miles up the valley of the creek. In recent years this village site has been used only as a summer camp.

The name given to the Bella Coola valley is *Nuxalk*, that given to the inhabitants of the valley, excluding those of village no. 27, is *Nuxalkmc*.[1]

Two points must be considered with regard to the above list of names. In the first place, can it be regarded as an accurate list, or do the names belong to the realm of mythology? In the second place, are the customs and beliefs of the inhabitants of the different towns sufficiently similar to be described without reference to local differences?

The first question is difficult to answer. The Bella Coola undoubtedly consider the existence of these towns to be an historical fact, but so do they regard the peopling of the earth by men created in the land above. Nevertheless, the above list appears to be substantially correct. The Bella Coola although now collected into a single village, still remember their ancient homes. One man, for example, stated as a matter of course that he was a man of *Snaiklk*. Further inquiry elicited the information that he had been born on *Kimsil*, where his father had moved at the time of the smallpox epidemic. It soon appeared that my informant's father was born at *Tcamsk*, had married there, and that it was his father who had moved

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[illegible]

[1] [illegible]

b:McDermith E-5 (1912-1924) 1948
NEA DeGroenia NEA

from *Snukk*. My informant's grandchildren regard themselves as *Snukk* boys, and their names are embodied in myths of that village, although their fathers have not lived there for five generations. There is no reason to suppose this case exceptional. Other instances were obtained of movements of people from one village to another at earlier times, and there seems no cause to doubt the general accuracy of these. Names embodied in the origin myths of different towns are used as prerogatives and have been potent factors in keeping their memory alive. Uncertainties and inaccuracies there must be in the foregoing list, but on the whole it appears to be fairly reliable, since few contradictions were received from different informants.

Accounts obtained of the same ceremonies from the descendants of people of different villages were found in most cases to be identical. There were a few differences in custom between the people of *Stuie* and those of the other upper valley towns on the one hand, and the inhabitants of the lower valley on the other. These will be mentioned when necessary, but on the whole the inhabitants of the Bella Coola valley can be considered as a tribal entity.

Boas (p. 48) gives a list of Bella Coola towns which agrees fairly well with the above. Among his villages are included *Pe'eslt* (no. 4), *Nalqaxtkwaux* (no. 7), and *Nuxalkmc* (no. 16).* All the older people agreed that these are the names of streams, though settlements located on them may have been known by the same designations. Names of the five villages recorded by Boas, nos. 6, 8, 9, 13, and 14, were not known by several old men questioned on the subject.

The villages of the Bella Coola valley did not form a political unit; each was independent. A common language was spoken throughout and the inhabitants of the different towns recognized that their origins and customs were similar. This was also recognized to be the case with regard to the people living on South Bentinck Arm, and at the head of Dean Channel.

*Lang is not sure the spelling of this monograph.

In McDermith E-5 [922-1924]/948
NES Bellacoola NES

Villages near the Dean River

"(38) *Awatlde*: the present site of the Kimsquit Indian village near the mouth of Dean River. The meaning of the name could not be learnt.

"(39) *Nuhl*, "Canyon": on the shore of Dean River at the bottom of the canyon. This large town was only recently deserted.

(39) *Ayat'i*, "Occupied Mound": on the south side of Dean River about one mile from the sea. This small town was deserted many years ago. The name is derived from the small mound on which it was built.

"(39) *Nanqmuk*, "Many Spawning Sockeye Salmon": on south side of Dean River, about one and a quarter miles from the sea. A large town recently deserted.

"(40) *Nanqilin*, "Place of Many Spring Salmon": on south bank about twenty-five miles from the sea. This spot was not settled when people first occupied this world, but later *Alqantcin* (I, p. 330) took possession of it.

(40) *Lymuk*: east side of river twenty-eight miles from the sea. There is doubt about this town. It is said to have been a colony of the Kimsquit River settlement, a statement difficult to understand.

(40) *Simal'as*, "Where Canoes Are Left": on the north side of the river about thirty-five miles from the sea. Immediately opposite was *Salhalu*, "Winter Trail." These two are considered as forming one town, but were probably never more than camping grounds at the spot where the winter trail to the interior left the river. It is possible, however, that they formed a town, since the names of the alleged first settlers in the beginning of time are preserved.

"(41) *Kelelus*: at Salmon House on the upper Dean River.

The history of the villages on the upper Dean is puzzling. Mythological accounts of their founding were obtained, and some of the older people stated that they had been occupied until recent years. On the other hand, there are apparently

[illegible] E-5 (512-524) 1948
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The names enfolded in this myth are still in use. That of *Nusklis* was enlisted as a potlatch during the winter of 1921, after being dormant since the death of the eighth *Nusklis*, an old man, which had taken place some thirty years previously.* To illustrate this myth a representation is made of the mergansar canoe, a specimen of which, obtained by Mr. Harlan I. Smith, is now in the National Museum, Ottawa.

According to another version of this myth, *Nusklis* and his party came to earth at Anahim Lake, in the country of the Carriers, bringing with them the coal-head salmon. They first went to Dean, but *Nusklis* did not like the place, so released only a few of the fish. They returned to Anahim Lake, and from there went to Salmon House. They found the spot so desirable that they settled and set free their store of coal-head salmon. That is the reason why this fish is so plentiful in the Dean River, and so relatively rare in the Bella Coola.

ANCIENT MYTH OF *SAMAM*[1]

In the beginning of time *Aqunsiw* constructed an elaborate shell covered post which reached from *Nuxmit-a* to *Atmaltqumux*, a mountain near the Kimsquit River, not far from its mouth. To this place came from above two men, *Samam*, "The First One," and his younger brother, *Gegemkilids*. The former flew down as an eagle, but the latter, in raven form, ascended down the post, which vanished after he had reached the earth. *Samam* spread his wings, like a mother bird, to shelter his younger brother. *Aqunsiw* had given *Gegemkilids* a box containing exclusive salmon, with instructions to throw them into the ocean, where they would increase rapidly to serve as food for him and his elder brother. He also taught the two how to build a salmon-weir to catch the fish. The brothers climbed down the mountain-side to the mouth of the Kimsquit River, where *Gegemkilids* became a man and cast forth his raven cloak above. He then released the salmon as he had been instructed, and also another present from *Aqunsiw*, a *mitqui* (I, p. 522), which was to serve as bait not only for fish but also for wealth and goods.

Samam declined to assume human form immediately, so began to crawl, and his younger brother, and so being thus left alone, started to

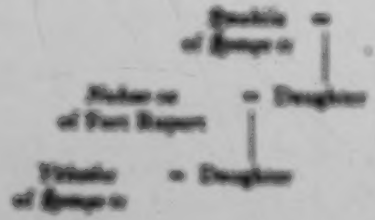
*This was the only instance given of an approximation of the interval since the first peopling of the earth. The Bella Coola usually reply, 'long, long ago,' and here are questioned further. This myth was received from a reliable informant, but it is doubtful whether its statements concerning the 'eighth' *Nusklis* would find credence among most Bella Coola. Even if it should be the eighth, that would be of little value in estimating the period to which the Bella Coola believe the myth to have been applicable, since names may remain dormant for generations.

[1] Related by Jim Pollard.

NEA Bellacoola NEA

In the beginning of time it is believed that a son of Imanus married the daughter of a Kitkehe chief (I, p. 338). As dower she brought her husband several Kitkehe names, which were transmitted in time to her children and which remained in Imanus's house, Kimsquit, for many generations. The Bella Coola believe that it was remembered for hundreds of years that these designations did not belong there. Whenever one was conferred, the myth was recounted to tell how it first came to Kimsquit; whereas in Kitkehe when the myth from which the names were taken was related, it was always added that those in question could not be used since they were now in Kimsquit. About one hundred and fifty years ago, *Anqlaut*, a Kimsquit woman, was married to a Kitkehe man to repay this debt, and ensure friendship between the two tribes. She took as dower the names long ago brought from Kitkehe. Similarly, if any name or other prerogative of an ancestral myth has been removed from the ancestral family to which it belongs, a father searches for a woman who will be able to restore it to his son as a marriage gift. The word used for searching is "hunt," the term applied to seeking for hunting animals.

The accompanying pedigree illustrates a return marriage. *Qaaklele's* daughter was married to a Fort Rupert man and took with her as dower several Bella Coola names and other prerogatives. The loss of these was remembered and they were brought back by the marriage of *Tlitaelo*, a member of *Qaaklele's* ancestral family, with a daughter of the woman who had gone to Fort Rupert. Usually several generations elapse before a return marriage is made. This incident was perfectly well known to the son of *Tlitaelo*.



If parents who are seeking a wife for their son have also a daughter approaching marriageable age, they may try to avoid a later return marriage by arranging that their daughter shall be married to a brother, or other near relative, of their son's wife. Exchange marriage was formerly more common than [771]

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

A visitation is not regarded as an inheritable right, but as a tendency; for generations no member of a family may see one of these beasts, but the tradition is preserved, and when one is seen it is recalled that such have been observed by ancestors of the fortunate one. Instances have occurred in which a person has obtained good luck without the tradition of this being in his family, but they are rare. On the other hand, a man may lose the advantage of his possession, even if he own a portion of a *mätsqas* or a *xoiatl*, through failure to observe ceremonial chastity.

Some of the Bella Coola believe that the *mätsqas* and the *xoiatl* are the same animal, which can assume these two forms; others that the two are distinct supernatural creatures. In any case the powers and characteristics ascribed to them are the same. Most families have a tradition regarding the appearance of the one or the other to their ancestors, and the information to be derived from them is always about that particular creature. Hence the details here described are probably not all known to any one individual.

The different types of appearances, and the different types of taboos called forth, should be noted. These are due to failure on the part of the Bella Coola to rationalize the sum total of their concepts. Each man recounts what he believes to have happened to one of his ancestors or friends, irrespective of whether or not the methods used may be in direct contradiction to those employed by someone else on another occasion. A man who has heard of the *mätsqas*, for example, from his father and mother, may describe contradictory means of dealing with the creature, and in each case may affirm that disaster would have followed if the method described had not been carried out. Such lack of co-ordination is typical of the Bella Coola.

According to an elderly Kimsquit man, the *mätsqas* was brought down in the beginning of time by one of his own ancestors, *Ompomtikhe*. It is to this fact that he attributes his own near approach to one on two occasions. As it is fre-

1:McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NE6 Bellacoola NE6

* 539
* 787

The woman's husband was not dismayed at her death, knowing she deserved it on account of having spoken harshly to her son-in-law. This was the only occasion on which *Tsēsalīē* killed anyone. After the funeral he said to his father-in-law:

"I am sorry for what has happened. If I had intended to slay your wife I should have done so by means of my supernatural power, whereas her death was caused accidentally by the too-great force latent in my own body."

"Do not let this event trouble you," the other man replied. "We all realize that my wife was in the wrong and thus caused her own death. I will take a new wife from among your relatives, and there the matter will drop."

A year later the marriage took place and the death of *Tsēsalīē*'s mother-in-law was thus amicably settled.[1]

THE GOOD FORTUNE OF *Yelhal·a*

Yelhal·a was very poor. He hunted diligently but was never successful, and the people of the village used to laugh at him. When feasts were given, *Yelhal·a* received a share, but he was never able to reciprocate, and this preyed on his mind. One day he set out at dawn for the mountains with his stick and his dog, but though he hunted industriously he returned at night with nothing better than herbs to cook for his supper. Undaunted, he set off again the following day, but had no better success, and again brought back only vegetables for his evening meal. He placed these on a stick before the fire to dry, and lay down, weary and depressed. Presently he saw a man enter the house and stand on the other side of the fire; around his head he wore a snake, which stamped him as a shaman. It was *Tsēsalīlit*, but *Yelhal·a* did not know this.

"*Yelhal·a*, what are you cooking?" asked the visitor.

"Mountain goat liver," he lied in answer.

Tsēsalīlit next inquired, "Is your dog a good mountain goat dog?"

"Yes," replied *Yelhal·a*, untruthfully. "Every day he goes hunting he kills twenty mountain goats."

"Is your stick a good one?" inquired *Tsēsalīlit*.

"Yes," answered *Yelhal·a*, "I always kill a great many mountain goats with it."

Tsēsalīlit then suggested that they exchange dogs and sticks. *Yelhal·a*, though at first unwilling, at length consented, and his visitor went away, leaving his own staff and dog behind.

[173]
[424]

[1] The above is regarded as an historical account, and the descendants of those who figure in the story consider that they have prior rights to relate it. But as it has no ceremonial significance, this claim is not pressed.

2: McIlwraith E-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NEA Bellacoola NEA

in a flesh-coloured bathing-suit, imitating the nakedness of earlier years. The writer was talking to one of the marshals, a very old man, and remarked how different the present rites must appear to him.

"Yes," replied the old man. "But after all, the change is not so great. In former years we imitated what the supernatural beings did, now we imitate what our fathers did."

Many ethnologists, acquainted with the elaborate rituals carried out on the coast early in this century, have expressed surprise at the rapidity with which these have dwindled to mere shadows. The writer believes that one factor for the Bella Coola decline in ritual, is the realization that the rites are imitative, and that accordingly their significance need not be lost when further imitation is added.

Further research would undoubtedly have added particulars of the manner in which other Cannibals carried out their rites, but to obtain the full details of all would have been detrimental to other types of investigation; it is believed that the above descriptions are typical. Before passing to other dances, a few general remarks on the Cannibal ritual may prove useful.

In view of the arduous character of the dance, and the necessity for impressing the uninitiated with the great power of the Cannibals, the marshals usually prohibit a man from acting unless he is physically strong. Rarely, however, a woman is allowed to be a Cannibal if she has the necessary prerogative, but usually only if she is the last survivor of her family. In such cases the shorter rite is the more common.

As before stated, *kusiut* origin myths are supposed to be remembered, but in practice few *kukusiut* know the history of their prerogatives. The process of forgetting has undoubtedly increased in the last few years, but the writer feels confident that they were never maintained with the same care as origin myths connected with the first people.

F. McIlwraith B-5 (1922-1924) 1948
NBS McIlwraith 1924

A 575 long ago the *Axsem* society was composed of individuals re-
* 796 garded as having supernatural endowments, and who perhaps
178 believed this themselves. In course of time their influence
184 increased to such an extent that they were able to convince
non-members of the supernatural origin of objects used in their
[532] ceremonial.

Unfortunately, information from Kimsquit was obtained
[115] almost exclusively from one old man, who, though a marked
well informed in *Axsem* matters and in many ways an almost
ideal informant, had long since realized that the dancers could
be nothing more than representations, and it is possible that
his remarks were coloured by this knowledge. Though he
tended to minimize the attitude of *belief* with which the un-
[781] initiated regarded masked figures, yet he fully agreed with
every statement made by the Bella Coola themselves with
regard to the firm *belief* of non-members concerning the super-
natural powers of the dancers. He also confirmed statements
[688] respecting punishment if an error should occur, and mentioned
the shooting of a Bella Bella dancer who had allowed his mask
to fall during a *nusxé* dance. As far as actual ritual is con-
cerned, the differences in procedure between Bella Coola and
Kimsquit are unimportant, and differences in *belief* are less
than they appear at first sight. The Bella Coola *Axsem*
[781] seem to have perfected their organization and to have been
able to impress the uninitiated to a greater extent than their
Kimsquit fellows, but the *fundamentals* of the society are
identical.

* 575 Traditions concerning the early history of the society are
* 796 probably of little value historically, but they are important as
● 173 indicating the mental attitude of the Bella Coola. Considering
the importance of the society there are relatively few accounts
of what took place long ago; the Bella Coola know that it
exists, believe that the rites are identical with those carried
out by their ancestors for generations, and theorize no further.
It was only in the beginning of time that things were radically
different; it is believed that then all the people were endowed

with such power that they killed one another in their performances. Consequently, they decided to dance only in the winter months, and merely to mimic the actions which had been previously carried out.

There are other traditions, probably with an historical basis, describing conflicts with the *o'wik*. The Bella Coola say that long, long ago there were not enough *kwatsi* names to go round for the old people to be admitted to the society, and that though members were reported as having supernatural powers, yet the *o'wik*, confident in their numbers and strength, used frequently to assail the supremacy of the *kwatsi*. On one occasion, when the latter had prepared an elaborate feast of smoked grease fish for themselves, the *o'wik* collected their weapons and demanded a share of the feast. The *kwatsi*, furiously angry, felt compelled to yield, though later they took revenge through the destruction wrought by many Cannibals and Screechers who feasted. It is said that even recently if the *kwatsi* did not invite the *o'wik* to one of their dances, they were always careful to placate them by sending half of the food as a present.

Sometimes the *o'wik*, collectively, were bold enough to kill a *kwatsi*, particularly if something had gone amiss in a dance house. Or other motives might be strong enough to outweigh respect for a member of the society. On one occasion a chief, who was not a member of the society, was told that his wife, who was, had been in the habit of prowling off at night with a Cannibal. The jealous husband prepared his bear-spear and slew the Cannibal when next he entered his house during a frenzied rampage of the village. *Kwatsi*, both from that village and others in the vicinity, combined to cause the murderer's death with the aid of a member of the society who was a professional killer.

Success did not always come to the *kwatsi* in quarrels between members of the two societies. Long ago, the *o'wik* were invited to a *qulaw* in a village in the upper Bella Coola valley. One of their own dances was taking place, but they

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expressed the opinion that the whole affair was a stupid blunder.

The Bella Coola were not long, long ago the usual scene of furious harangues o'wit and bellowing as the incorporation of members of the former society into the latter like was often consummated. The following account of an incident of this kind was obtained from a Kimsquit man who regarded it as historically accurate.

Some five hundred years after the first settlement of the earth, the members of the two societies used to live amicably together during the summer, which was not surprising considering that both contained members of the same families. But during the winter the habitues of gatherings went to a village on the Dean River for their dances, while the o'wit also gathered on the same season in the village of Tsetsik, opposite the present Hunters Cannery below Kimsquit.** There was considerable jealousy between the two organizations, and the members were always seeking an opportunity to divide and ridicule their rivals. A Cannibal dance had been given by the habitues and the o'wit, who were present as uninvited guests, had reacted with wonder the disappearance of the performers into the mysterious rushing above. But a few days later, *Lamamkin*, a chief and leader in one of the o'wit dances, happened to be in a lonely part of the forest where he was amazed to meet the Cannibal. The latter, confident of his supernatural power, spoke:

"In coming we today you have met disaster, you will soon be a corpse."

Lamamkin, a middle-aged man of powerful physique, was not impressed by the other's powers, whether physical or supernatural.

"Ha," he answered. "It is you who have fallen into trouble. You are old and feeble and if you try to injure me it will be the worse for you."

"My age has nothing to do with it," answered the Cannibal. "You have met me and will die."

At this juncture two of the Cannibal's guardian companions appeared, but *Lamamkin* still did not fear because they were both old and unarmed, whereas he had an axe. But when two more habitue appeared,

**The Kimsquit informants stated that long ago a similar segregation of o'wit into one village and habitue into another took place in Bella Coola. Bella Coola informants knew nothing of this. The expulsion of the uninitiated from houses in which *hamat'sa* dances are taking place leads to a division of the village, and it is easy to understand how two sections could have been created without definite intention. This would hardly account for a separation into two villages and no explanation for the statement is offered.

To these two is attributed the origin of the practice of showing to decide priority of invitation giving. It is said that both Komenbalo and the Cannibal once wished to invite the people to a ceremony on the same evening and agreed to shove against each other to decide which should have preference. Komenbalo prevailed, and the Cannibal duly postponed his dance and went with his associates to the winner's house.

As before stated, stories of this kind dealing with the alleged history of the society are of slight value. As far as they go, they agree with other evidence pointing to the gradual growth of the Suque society from a band of elders endowed with supernatural power to a society with enormous prestige, dominating the life of the community and entirely overshadowing the o'ali who seem once to have been their rivals.

534

Another account of the flood states that while many persons fled to Mount *Nusqaitl*, others took refuge on the summit of the mountain opposite to it, on the north side of the Bella Coola River. The waters continued to rise until the latter peak was on the point of being submerged, when it requested *Nusqaitl* to give it some of itself. *Nusqaitl* complied, and gave to the other the small knob that projects from its summit. This was so nourished.

A similar tale was handed at the same time. The Kimsquit River rose until the people were driven to the slopes of the mountain now known as *Saltaltl*, to the west of the river. There they were forced to camp for several months, and it is from this event that the river received its name, which means "Many Houses." The Dean River people were driven to Mount *Tsai'*, where, in later years, indications of their sojourn were to be found, such as mooring loops for canoes, holes for lifting fish-traps, and various utensils. One man tried to remove some of these relics, but they crumbled to his hands as if they had been burnt paper.

According to Bella Coola belief, the flood was not limited to any one locality. As evidence of its occurrence in Dean Rapids the following myth was related by a man who had heard it from his father's father, a Dean Rapids Indian.

One of the latter's ancestors, having dreamt that a flood would cover the earth, prepared a great quantity of gum with which he pitched his house both inside and out. Presently it began to rain, and the deluge continued until the whole land was covered, but this man dwelt secure in his rain-proof house. When at last he heard the sound of frogs on the roof, he knew that the flood must have diminished as it dared again to do *dune*. When he and his family went outside they found on the shore two *eulachon*, the supernatural double-headed salmon that cause land-slides. From this event the man took the designation, *Nekas'os*. When the present owner of the name performs his ceremonial, the hooting hoards are in the shape of a *eulachon*, and there appears a masked figure of a man who always shields his face with his arm. This appears to be an allusion to the man protecting himself from the waters.[16]

It is said that the time of the great heat[17] occurred soon after the flood.

538
173

Historical Stories

Although the Bella Coola regard all the stories included in this chapter as chronicles of events, yet they realize that all the preceding possess elements of the supernatural which are

[16] It was impossible to learn the type of ceremonial of which this story serves as origin myth; it has accordingly been included in this miscellaneous section.

[17] Various accounts of this have already been given; see vol. II, p. 434 and p. 500.

not likely to occur at the present time; in fact, they belong to the golden age of the distant past. In addition, a few tales are popularly told, not for their wealth of interesting detail, but as historical incidents. Some of these contain exaggerations that verge on mythology, whereas others, especially those dealing with certain individuals not long deceased, have clearly a foundation of truth. The themes include tales of travel, hunting exploits, the experiences of criminals, and varied subjects.

THE WIFE WHO WAS SOLD AS A SLAVE

This story describes the adventures of a Bella Coola woman, daughter of a chief named Tsukwaaia, who was married to a Bella Bella chief. The latter's father sold her as a slave to Tsilaxa, a Kitlope chief and cousin of the chief with the same name who was so feared by the Bella Coola. This was, of course, contrary to all established custom. Tsilaxa carried the woman away to Kitlope, where there seemed little hope for her return.

Tsilaxa owned a number of crabapple trees at Kitlope which he visited every autumn to collect and preserve the fruit. The woman had been with him for some time when he went as usual to the ripe apples. Members of different tribes can be distinguished by their different physique and a Kitlope, recognizing that the woman was a Bella Coola, asked her how she came to be with Tsilaxa. She told him how she had been sold, disgracefully, and he promised to help her return home. Telling her to conceal her plans, he bade her to be ready to flee early the following morning. At the appointed time he appeared, bringing dried clothes, grease, moccasins, and other equipment, wrapped in a seal's stomach. He sketched on the ground the overland route to Kimsquit, telling her how many streams of the Kitlope River she must pass before following one to the south, thence across the divide, and down the Kimsquit River.

The woman started out, but after several days of travel realized that she had passed the place where she should turn south, and was lost. In point of fact, she was at this time near Owen Lake. She headed back in the hope of recovering her trail, but snow fell and she could go no further; to make matters worse she had consumed all her clothes, and most of the grease. The unfortunate woman sought shelter under a big tree, where in time she was completely covered with snow. Every day she ate a small

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